

trillions and trillions of dollars in new taxes and trillions and trillions of dollars in new debt.

President Biden and nearly every Democrat in Congress went on record in support of this socialist budget bill. Not a single Republican supports it, and not even every Democrat supports it. Now Democrats are fighting among themselves, and it is an absolute disgrace. Democrats ought to be thankful that bill didn't pass, because if it passed, inflation would get worse, just in time for elections.

This isn't what the American people want. The American people have many concerns right now about the direction of this country and the direction that the President is trying to lead the Nation. The two biggest concerns are the coronavirus in their communities and the cost of living that impacts on them, on the people every day. Democrats are failing on both.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

CHINA

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, we have started a new year, 2022, filled with opportunities and possibilities. Yet, even as we contemplate new beginnings, many things remain the same, especially when it comes to the crimes and atrocities being carried out by the Chinese Communist Party.

The genocide against the Uighur Muslims is still ongoing—a million individuals enslaved. The attacks on democracy and the silencing of free speech in Hong Kong continue. In fact, it was just announced that one of Hong Kong's last remaining pro-democracy news outlets, Citizen News, is shutting its doors because it cannot continue operations under the current climate of repression under China's national security law. In spite of all that, just 31 days from today, leaders and athletes from across the world will gather in Beijing to celebrate the opening ceremonies of the 2022 Winter Olympic Games.

The Olympic Games are meant to inspire and to bring people together to build a better world, using sports to foster what the Olympic movement describes as a peaceful society, concerned with the preservation of human dignity, but China is not using these games to advance human dignity; it is using the games to polish its international image and hide its crimes and abuses. A peaceful society, concerned with the preservation of human dignity, would not idly stand by and allow its government to silence those who speak out for the rights of their fellow workers. Yet we see that happening time and time again in China.

This picture is of Fang Ran. He is a 26-year-old Ph.D. student in Hong Kong University's Sociology Department, where he studies Chinese labor relations and the Chinese labor movement. It is reported that Fang, while conducting fieldwork on his thesis about labor empowerment in China, in his

hometown on the mainland last August, was taken into custody by the Chinese authorities under the phrase "residential surveillance at a designated location."

What is "residential surveillance at a designated location"?

It is a coercive measure that allows authorities to hold individuals for up to 6 months, with no access to lawyers and no access to family at all.

Apparently, his research, as well as frequent social media posts about workers' rights, sexual harassment, and the displacement of migrant workers, put him on Beijing's radar.

According to one article, this young man roamed the factory towns of southern China, immersing himself in workers' lives and supporting them while they tried to strike or seek compensation for work injuries.

Even the fact that he is a loyal member of the Communist Party did not save him from officials' ire. One of his friends said that, in the months leading up to his disappearance, Fang had repeatedly been asked to drink tea. "Drink tea" is a code word for being summoned for questioning and harassment by Chinese security services. It has now been 4 months since the last time he was invited to "drink tea," and he has not been seen again. He has been detained because of his advocacy for workers in China—workers, in fact, like 31-year-old Chen Guojiang, a gig delivery worker. Gig delivery workers were essential during the pandemic to deliver food, groceries, and other needed items.

While delivering scores of takeout orders a day, Chen would film short videos that showed the dangerous working conditions of the delivery workers, and he used those videos to advocate not just for better pay but for action against powerful Chinese e-commerce companies that benefit from fostering dangerous work conditions. Whether he intended it or not, this man, driving along on his electric scooter, wearing his bright, windproof jacket, became a rarity in China—a labor leader and organizer.

Then, suddenly, last February—almost a year ago—he disappeared. Over the course of the COVID pandemic, a movement for labor rights had begun to grow and gained mainstream traction, and delivery workers like Chen, who were lifelines for untold millions, could be seen outside every apartment building and every office building. There were symbols of this growing movement.

So, in the eyes of the Chinese Government, individuals like Chen had to be stopped—stopped from advocating, in even the smallest way, for any sort of collective effort to improve the condition of Chinese workers. So, almost a year ago, he was detained and given the catchall charge of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble." So many dissidents in China have been detained over the last few years for picking quarrels and provoking trouble because

Chen believed, as he said in one of his videos, that "delivery workers are humans, too, not robots, though the system wants to make us like cogs in a machine." His case is being handled with great secrecy by authorities.

About a month into his detention, friends and supporters began collecting donations to cover his legal fees. They raised about \$20,000, but then the Chinese officials contacted every person who donated, warning them not to help Chen. When the officials visited his parents to deliver a notice of his detention, they demanded his father sign the notice even though it was impossible for his father to read what was on the notice because of several lines being smudged out. So the father had no idea what he was actually acknowledging on that paperwork. Chen, for advocating for improvements in worker conditions, is facing up to 5 years in a Chinese prison.

His status and his future are unclear, but I call on the Chinese Government: Release those you have detained, like this young man who was working to make conditions better for workers in China.

Well, here we are, just 31 days from the start of the Winter Olympics in China—Olympics that the International Olympic Committee says are about a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.

I say to the Chinese Government: Wouldn't it be the right thing to do for human dignity to release individuals who have simply spoken up like these two young men did for their fellow workers?

I say to the International Olympic Committee: Wouldn't it be the right thing for you to call on the Chinese Government to release individuals like these two young men who have simply spoken up to improve the condition of their fellow workers? Wouldn't that be consistent with human dignity?

I will tell you what is not consistent with human dignity, and that is Chinese genocide against the Uighur community, enslaving near a million people. What is not consistent with human dignity is striking down the free press in Hong Kong. The slogan of the Washington Post is, "Democracy Dies in Darkness," and that is the goal of the Chinese Government—to drive a stake through the democratic rights of Hong Kong citizens.

As we approach these games, let us not allow the Chinese Government and the Communist Party to hide their repression behind the glitz and glamour of Olympic Gold. Let's, instead, dedicate ourselves to calling out, time and time again, the oppression the Chinese Government is engaged in and demand justice that delivers human dignity.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The Senator from Iowa.

FALSE CLAIMS ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, we study about checks and balances in government in political science classes.